

Application No. 10/040,322  
Amendment Dated March 29, 2004  
Reply to Office Action of February 25, 2004

**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS:**

Claims 1-4 are pending in this application. Claims 1 and 2 are allowed. Claims 3 and 4 are amended to recite the protective plate 51.

Claims 3 and 4 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as anticipated by Hirabayashi. In view of the patent amendment, the rejection is traversed. Hirabayashi lacks a protective plate, thereby exposing gears to foreign particles such as dust, toothpaste and liquids, which may otherwise contact and compromise the efficiency of the gears. Claims 3 and 4 now recite such a protective plate.

New Claims 5 and 6 are also added based on the subject matter of Claim 1 concerning the brush shafts.

The issuance of a Notice of Allowance is requested.

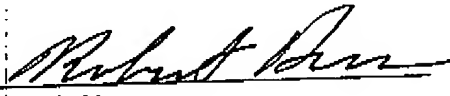
**CORRESPONDENCE AND FEES:**

In the event that there are fees necessitated by this response, authorization is hereby given to charge Deposit Account No. 03-3839. Please address all correspondence to Intellectual Property Docket Administrator, Gibbons, Del Deo, Dolan, Griffinger & Vecchione, One Riverfront Plaza, Newark, NJ 07102-5497. Should there be any questions or other matters that may be resolved by a telephone call, the Examiner is invited to contact the applicants' undersigned attorney at the number below. Any communications should be sent directly to him at the number below.

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Respectfully submitted,

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